

Black Dog Dreams

Matthew Schlanger, 1999

While living upstate and working at the Experimental Television Center, I had built a personalized video system which paralleled the ETC system. Black Dog Dreams was the first work which was created exclusively with my system in Brooklyn. So for Black Dog Dreams there was no limit to how long I was free to leave up the patches. Each individual section of BDD might have run for days, weeks or months. I was truly able to live with the work as it was created, and this reinforced my attraction of working with sequences of real-time video. As it turned out this was the last new work which I finished.

While editing Black Dog Dreams my dog, a black lab, was sick and he eventually died before the work was complete. He was on my mind at the time. And though the black dog was always in my dreams, at once he was there more frequently. I am always happy to see him, surprised, and always a little guilty that I have not been walking him.

There was an earlier 8mm film, with the same name, which I had shown a single time at an adhoc East Village backyard 8mm film festival. In this film, mostly double exposures, there is a long shot of the black dog sitting in our Binghamton backyard, content with the warmth and with the fragrance of the cherry blossoms. Content even though his leash is tangle around the rusted sculpture we had tied him to. In this version the dog was dreaming humans. This film was the prototype of a film which had shown up in a recurring dream. I would be publicly showing a film, and for one reason or another, I am always surprised by the content as it reveals itself.

Black Dog Dreams is structured as a six part movement. Each section is comprised of 2 or more shorter real-time recordings. The piece is a journey.

